

Worksession

MEMORANDUM

TO: Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee (GO)

FROM: Marlene Michaelson, Senior Legislative Analyst
Justina J. Ferber, Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: **Worksession:** Organizational Reform Commission – Recommendation No.2 -
Increase use of the Regional Services Centers' citizen advisory boards and the
Office of Community Partnerships

Recommendation

In its report to the Council dated January 31, 2011, the Organizational Reform Commission (ORC), in **Recommendation No. 2**, recommended the County increase use of the Regional Services Centers' citizen advisory boards and the Office of Community Partnerships.

Recommendation No. 2: Increase use of the Regional Services Centers' citizen advisory boards and the Office of Community Partnerships, whenever possible, in lieu of creating new citizen boards or committees.

The full text of the recommendation is below:

No. 2 Regional Services Centers and the Office of Community Partnerships

The County's Regional Services Centers each have a citizens' advisory board whose principal function is to receive input from citizens in their region on issues of importance to the community. We urge that, over time, the general culture of establishing new boards, committees and commissions to respond to particular issues be curbed in recognition of the capacity of the existing Regional Services Centers and their advisory boards. The Executive's Office of Community Partnerships can also serve as an ongoing platform to provide for citizen participation in the governmental process.

Executive's Response

In a memorandum to the Council President dated February 21, 2011, the Executive responded to each of the 28 recommendations in the ORC report. The Executive's response to Recommendation No. 2 is described on the next page.

2. Increase the use of Regional Services Centers and Office of Community Partnerships

County Executive's Position: Support

I support the ORC recommendations regarding the increased use of Regional Services Centers and the Office of Community Partnerships. My FY12 Recommended Operating budget will include a detailed plan to maximize the use of current resources of these two offices and create a model that is more focused on engaging the community to work collaboratively with each other and with County government to address important community needs and ultimately to build stronger more inclusive and self sufficient communities.

Council Staff Analysis and Recommendation

The Commission's recommendation should be considered in light of the County Executive's recommendation to reorganize the Regional Services Centers and Office of Community Partnerships (as well as other offices within County Government) into a new Office of Community Engagement. Since the budget was transmitted shortly before the completion of this memorandum, Staff has not yet had the opportunity to assess whether the reorganized office could implement the ORC recommendation and believes this issue (along with the overall responsibilities and resources for the new Office of Community Engagement) should be considered during the Committee review of the operating budget. Cutbacks in staffing throughout government will make it difficult to staff boards, committees and commissions, and the Council and Executive will need to be very selective in assigning any new responsibilities.

Staff believes that the underlying concept of the ORC recommendation is to reduce County staff and resources associated with staffing boards, committees and commissions and to reduce the number of boards, committees and commissions by using existing advisory boards whenever possible. This recommendation is valid regardless of any changes in the structure of County Government and Staff supports this concept. A recent example of an effort to use an existing group, rather than create a new one, is the GO Committee's recommendation that the Cross Agency Resource Sharing Committee (CARS) assist in developing recommendations on procurement consolidation issues, rather than creating a new group to undertake this effort.

Recommendation: Support the recommendation to reduce the number of boards, committees and commissions by using existing advisory boards whenever possible and reassess the ability of the Office of Community Engagement to undertake this responsibility during the Council review of the FY12 operating budget.